

## **NOAA Web Update June 7, 2010**

### **DEEPWATER HORIZON Incident**



#### **Situation: Monday 07 June —**

BP continues to collect oil and gas through the 'Top Hat' assembly placed over the well head several days ago. The assembly is collecting approximately 10,000-11,000 bbls/day. This is only a portion of the total amount of oil leaking from the riser. BP is working to optimize the 'Top Hat' system and engineers project that it will be a few days before an assessment can be made as to the success of the containment effort. Additional enhancements are also being considered. The first planned enhancement will use hoses and manifold deployed during the "top kill" operation to take oil and gas from holes on the side of the MC 252 blow-out preventer (BOP) through a separate riser to a vessel on the surface. This additional system may help increase the amount of oil and gas that can be captured from the well and is currently expected to be available for deployment in mid-June. BP continues to drill the two relief wells that are scheduled to be completed by mid-August.

#### **Response**

In the nearshore zone, light onshore (S/SW/WSW) winds are forecast to continue into the coming week at 10 knots or less. Persistent southerly winds have resulted in continued movement of the slick towards the Mississippi and Alabama barrier islands. The westerly component of winds has moved oil east along the Florida Panhandle. Trajectories indicate coastal regions between Dauphin Island, Louisiana and Freeport, Florida will continue to experience shoreline contacts throughout this forecast period while threats to shorelines in Breton Sound, Chandeleur Sound, and the NE side of the Mississippi Delta are reduced. Any remaining floating oil to the west of the Delta could come ashore between Timbalier Bay and Southwest Pass.

Today, a mission was flown to search for sheen or surface oil entering or near the Loop Current and none was discovered. Also, satellite imagery showed an anomaly near Southwest Pass in Louisiana but a subsequent overflight revealed only sediment from the Mississippi River.

#### **Closures**

NOAA Fisheries Service is modifying the fishery closure in the Gulf of Mexico today. The modified closure opens up 430 sq mi of the 565 sq mi area closed on June 5 based on trajectory data. The total federal fishery closure now measures about 32% of the Gulf of Mexico EEZ, compared to the June 5 closure comprising about 33% of the Gulf of Mexico EEZ. See [Southwest Fishery Bulletin](#) (PDF, 224K). Any changes to the closure are announced daily at 12 p.m. Eastern at [sero.nmfs.noaa.gov](http://sero.nmfs.noaa.gov) and take effect at 6 p.m. Eastern the same day.

#### **Sea Turtles and Marine Mammals (effective June 6, 2010)**

A total of 300 sea turtles have been verified from April 30 to June 6 within the designated spill area. (The designated spill area for sea turtles and marine mammals is from the Texas/Louisiana border to

Apalachicola, Florida.) Between Saturday, June 5, and Sunday, June 6, six turtle strandings were verified, all were dead (one each in Florida, Alabama, and Mississippi and three from Louisiana). Five heavily-oiled sea turtles were captured Sunday in the ongoing offshore search and rescue operation. Four were alive and one was dead. This brings to 30 the number of sea turtles captured in the on-water turtle search and rescue operation by NOAA, the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission and other partners working under the Unified Command. Twenty-five of those captured turtles are in rehabilitation at Audubon Aquarium, two turtles were captured dead and three captured alive subsequently died at the aquarium. A total of 35 stranded or captured turtles have had evidence of external oil. These include the 30 captured turtles, four live stranded sea turtles (two caught in skimming operations) and one dead stranded sea turtle. All others have not had visible evidence of external oil.

Of the 300 turtles verified from April 30 to June 6, a total of 248 turtles stranded dead, 22 stranded alive. Three of those subsequently died. Three live stranded turtles have been released, including two that were found in Mississippi and released after rehabilitation in Ten Thousand Islands, Florida. There are 41 turtles in rehabilitation. Turtle strandings during this time period have been higher in Louisiana, Mississippi and Alabama than in previous years for this same time period. This may be due in part to increased detection and reporting, but this does not fully account for the increase.

From April 30 to June 6, 35 stranded dolphins have been verified in the designated spill area. Of this, 33 dolphins stranded dead and two stranded alive. One died on the beach and another that stranded in Florida was euthanized. So far, two of the 35 stranded dolphins had evidence of external oil. However, we are unable at this time to determine whether the animals were externally oiled before or after death. Since April 30, the stranding rate for dolphins in Louisiana, Mississippi and Alabama has been higher than the historic numbers for the same time period in previous years. In part, this may be due to increased detection and reporting and the lingering effects of an earlier observed spike in strandings for the winter of 2010. A stranding is defined as a dead or debilitated animal that washes ashore or is found in the water.

## **Assessment**

NOAA's Damage Assessment, Remediation, and Restoration Program (DARRP) is conducting a [Natural Resource Damage Assessment](#) (PDF, 89 K). The focus currently is to assemble existing data on resources and their habitats and collect baseline (pre-spill impact) data. Data on oiled resources and habitats are also being collected.